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To find a cure

Maisie Russell named
to local Alzheimer's
Association board

See story on page 4



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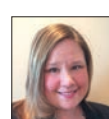
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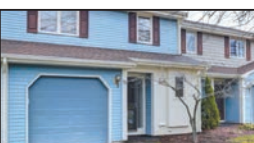
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Sarah Andrea Named Branch Vice President of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Wethersfield



Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Connecticut and Westchester County, N.Y. is pleased to announce that Sarah Andrea has been named branch vice president of the Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office in Wethersfield.

Andrea has been in the real estate business since 1986 and has extensive experience in residential real estate sales and management. She is also a certified general appraiser.

"We are greatly pleased to welcome Sarah to our leadership team. As a successful real estate professional, she brings with her a breadth of experience and a strong understanding of what it takes to grow and sustain a successful office," said Joe Valvano, president of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage of Connecticut and Westchester County, New York. "I look forward to watching our Wethersfield office continue to grow under Sarah's leadership in the months and years to come."

In addition to overseeing the day-to-day sales operations, Andrea is preparing for the grand opening celebration of the soon to be renovated, state-of-the-art office and regional training center. Andrea can be reached at the Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office in Wethersfield at 860-563-1010

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

“Our basic purpose from day one has been to provide services to the community.”

- Pat Rinaldi

See story page 38

ON THE COVER

Longtime volunteer Maisie Russell is the chairman of the Connecticut Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association's annual fund-raising Brain Ball set for June 10 at the Connecticut Science Center.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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Maisie Russell works to end Alzheimer's

Resident appointed to board of directors and will lead Brain Ball

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

When it comes to giving back to the community, Maisie Russell had two excellent role models: her mother and father.

"My father was a bishop who held various leadership positions in international church organizations. He had a passion for church leadership and most importantly, a passion for service to others. He lived his calling," Russell said.

"My mom and my Christian faith is a great part of who I am. She was an effective leader, a visionary, a pastor's wife and minister who was very involved in the social service affairs of her community.

"She was very passionate about young women striving for success, both naturally and spiritually, and she taught all her children to be leaders. Thinking about all of who she was, I am determined to continue her legacy," she added.

Russell, second vice president of corporate tax at The Travelers Companies Inc., has been doing that in a variety of ways. The Alzheimer's Association, Connecticut Chapter, recently appointed her to its board of directors. She is chairman of the association's annual Brain Ball gala scheduled for June 10.

"Maisie is passionate in her quest to help end Alzheimer's. There is nothing too little or too big. She is all in. She is a community leader who is willing to help with any task asked of her," Jennifer Walker, vice president of communications and advocacy, said.

"She took on the care of her mother while she was alive and knew that she needed to do something to make a difference in her life and other family members who have faced this disease," Walker added.

Two-thirds of people with Alzheimer's are women and more

than 60 percent of caregivers for people with Alzheimer's are women.

In recognition of women at the epicenter of this disease, the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter formed a group of "Women's Champions" whose members are committed to making Alzheimer's a priority in their lives, work, volunteerism and philanthropy.

Russell is a Class of 2016 Women's Champion.

The mission statement of the Women's Champions is they "are empowered to use their unique experience, passion and influence to advance the mission of the Alzheimer's Association through advocacy, education, outreach and philanthropy."

Russell knows the disease well as a caregiver.

"I got involved with the Alzheimer's Association because of my mother.

My mom developed this disease and after she developed this disease, I wanted to learn more about this disease, I went online and researched. I like to be extremely informed. I did some research and found the Alzheimer's Association," she said.

"At that time, they were located here in Rocky Hill and I live in town. I

went to the Alzheimer's Association office which was on the Silas Deane Highway at the time. (The office has since moved to Southington). I got information, pamphlets, and I also got information on the different seminars and the different groups, events and discussions they have.

"I attended several of those events. I wanted to learn more about this disease and what my mom was facing and how I needed to adapt and change, and the best care I could get for her. I wanted to be sure I could get the best care for her throughout her journey," Russell said.

"I believe in giving back and if I can make a difference in one person's life, I know I have done something. It's just part of who I am. I did research; I became an advocate for

my mom throughout her whole journey," she added.

"It forced me to get more and more involved. I know what this disease looks like. There are seven stages and I went through all seven stages with my mom."

Walker called Russell "an outstanding asset to our organization since she became involved



Courtesy photo

Maisie Russell was photographed in May 2016 at the Alzheimer Association's Celebrating Hope event in Greenwich. She was recently appointed to the organization's board of directors.

when she attended the first Brain Ball three years ago. Our staff was there to support her when she lost her mother and she has supported us with her full heart to honor her mother since.

"She supports our events with her attendance throughout the state, advocates at the State Capitol, speaks publicly and in the media to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease and helps with fund raising to support research, care and support and advocacy," Walker said.

Events such as the Brain Ball, which takes place during Alzheimer's Brain and Awareness month, shine a light on the illness.

"[The goal of] the Brain Ball is to bring an awareness to the community of what this disease is all about. The end goal is to end this disease, to bring awareness, to bring individuals from the business community, just to pull everyone in to make them be aware of what this disease is and how much we need the support," Russell said.

"It's the sixth-leading cause of death in the state of Connecticut," she added.

While Russell, who also teaches corporate tax as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Hartford, is passionate about her work with the Alzheimer's Association, it is not the

Fast facts from the Alzheimer's Association

- Every 66 seconds someone in the United States develops the disease.
- One in three senior citizens dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia.
- It kills more people than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.
- Since 2000, deaths from heart disease have decreased by 14 percent while deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased by 89 percent.
- In 2017, Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost the nation \$259 billion; by 2050 these costs could rise as high as \$1.1 trillion.
- More than five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. By 2050 this number could rise as high as 16 million.
- Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States.
- An estimated 75,000 people are living with Alzheimer's in Connecticut. That number is expected to increase to 80,000 by 2020 and 91,000 by 2025.

only organization that has captured her interest.

She's treasurer of the board of directors of Chrysalis Center, a non-profit organization in Hartford from which in 2013 she received a distinguished volunteer award in recognition of her service and dedication to the organization.

She's on the board of trustees of the Amistad Center for Art and Culture of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art; a member of the leadership team of the Black/African American Diversity Network at Travelers; and an active member of the National Black MBA, Hartford Chapter, among other activities.

She also serves as treasurer of the executive board of the Costume and Textile Society at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art.

"A number of years ago, I was part owner in The Hat Place, LLC that was located in Rocky Hill," she said, a shop that specialized in couture designer hats.

"I love hats; I have a lot of hats,"

she added with a laugh. "I got involved with that committee and that organization through that. It's a great group and I love what I do that. I love the group of individuals I volunteer with," she said.

"What I really like is to be involved with different things. I like to be a well-rounded individual. Each one [organization] is totally different. We serve different groups in the community.

"It's part of the diverse population we have. You meet a different group in arts than you meet in a social organization. It's different, but I like that balance."

She finds a common bond in all of her projects.

"Follow your heart and the reason I'm saying that is you have to actually believe in something you're doing and let your heart lead you. If you follow that, it makes it so much easier to do volunteer work," she said.

"Because of my mom and the journey she went through, the Alzheimer's Association has become very near and dear to my heart. I

find the time because I'm extremely organized, that's a part of who I am from the leadership position I have. I have to be extremely organized. It's just part of my DNA," she added.

"I do say no. I do know when enough is enough. I'm a very organized person. I plan things out. When you enjoy things, it makes it so much easier and I do enjoy it."

Russell also has certain practi-

es that help keep her centered.

"I start my days with an inspiring thought, a scripture and prayer. After this devotion, I approach my days with much confidence," she said.

"My faith is a big part of who I am and my major driving force, a major reason I am able to do so many things, including blessing others." **RHL**



Maisie Russell, chairman of the Connecticut Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association's annual fundraising Brain Ball, works closely with Rose Vigdal, the association's director of special events.



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LIFE

in the classroom

District art shows put student talent on display

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Young artists from across town had the opportunity to take creative work off the family refrigerator and put it onto the walls of their school for the district's annual art shows.

Rocky Hill High School and Griswold Middle School have been hosting their own art shows for years. For the first time, students at Stevens and West Hill schools were able to showcase their work as well.

"I think it's important for the kids to see their work up on display," high school art teacher Eileen Schnyder said. "They're proud of the things they have been creating."

The art show at the high school has been occurring annually for decades.

"I know it's been going on at least since the '70s," Schnyder said.

The halls of the school were adorned May 23-24 with artwork from students taking any of the variety of classes offered. Every art student is able to choose two favorite pieces to be matted and put on display.

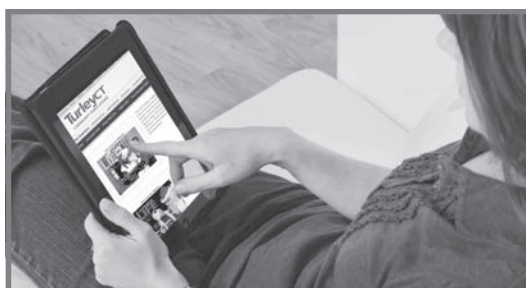
Though some students may pick art from the same assignment as others, each piece is unique.

"Here it's about their personal expression and every one of them is completely different," Schnyder said.



One of the pieces on display at the Griswold Middle School art show was this ceramic skull by Elena McKinney.

Photos courtesy of Eileen Schnyder



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She and the other RHHS art teachers may guide students on what to display, but the decision on which pieces to select is completely left to the students.

"They really take a sense of pride in what they're creating," Schnyder said.

Those taking advanced studio art classes were each given their own table for the show at which to display their work.

"It helps because I'm developing a portfolio," senior Stephen Gerrick, 17, said as he worked to mat and frame one of his photographs.

He hopes to attend art school next year and said these shows help to prepare him for that. He added that hosting the art show is an excellent way to get new students to think about taking an art class.

"I feel like a lot of people think, oh, I'm not good at art, so I shouldn't take it, but that's exactly why you take art classes," he said. "The art show probably helps your confidence that you see that you can succeed in art, as opposed to having to know how to draw beforehand."

Students at the high school

"I want people to come and see what the students are doing so they can see that the art program is trying to cultivate visually literate, emotionally intelligent, articulate students."

– Eileen Schnyder

level are required to write a statement with each piece explaining their creations.

"As they grow in the program, they have to find their voice and figure out what they want to accomplish," Schnyder said.

Students at the middle and elementary schools are not required to provide written statements but the teachers there generally include a written segment about each assignment.

At the middle school, students take art for a quarter of the year. To accommodate this, the school has one art show in January and another toward the end of the year. This year, the pieces were displayed in the school from May 10-12.

"We go down to help," Schnyder said. "My National Art Honor Society kids each put in 10 hours of community service hanging works and matting them."

That help was also needed at the elementary school levels where the art teachers were tasked with their first school-wide art show.

"We just thought it was something that could be a good community outreach," Stevens School art teacher Jilani Scherer said. "It's something that the kids really feel good about and they're proud about and that they can share with their parents and other kids in the school."

Art shows at the elementary level are a large undertaking. While art is an elective class for students at the

high school, every student at both West Hill and Stevens take the class.

"At West Hill she has 760 kids that she sees and Stevens has over 500," Schnyder said. "We really had some difficulty, just logistically, having that many students."

In order to accommodate that volume, both West Hill and Stevens broke the art show into two nights. West Hill held its first show for students in kindergarten through grade three on May 4 and its second show for grades 4-5 May 31, while Stevens had one show for kindergarten through second grade on May 11 and third grade through fifth grade May 15.

"There's so much that goes into it," Scherer said. "Just to start, we're taking 500 pieces of artwork and mounting it with each kid's name."

Despite the organizational challenge of hosting these shows, both Scherer and Schnyder said it is important for students and their families to begin recognizing the importance of art at a young age.

"Art as a subject, especially for the little kids, is important for them to explore the materials and understand the world," Schnyder said. "It's



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The walls of Griswold Middle School were lined with paintings and other artwork created by students.

an important subject and I think it gets marginalized frequently.”

According to Scherer, art classes can often serve as a comforting place for students who may have difficulty in other areas.

“Aside from tapping into the kids’ creative side, some of the kids who don’t succeed in other areas really succeed in the art room,” she said.

Seeing a growing emphasis on science and technology in the classroom, Schnyder stressed the importance of art in conjunction with those other subject areas to create a holistically prepared student.

“It’s important for these students to understand what they’re looking at, to be able to critically look at what’s presented to them,” she said.

“We’re trying to create visually literate students who can communicate on a number of levels.”

Through those courses, students at the high school have come to realize the importance of art in their everyday lives.

“Art is literally in everything around us,” Stephen said. “I mean, even this desk wouldn’t exist if

someone didn’t design it.”

Students are also learning how to use and critique art as a form of communication.

“An illustration can be far more powerful than numbers and facts,” 18-year-old Stephen Shepard said.

Schnyder is grateful to the Board of Education and superintendent for their continued support of art education in the schools, as well as the grants provided by the Rocky Hill Education Foundation.

“The Rocky Hill Public Schools are great about supporting the arts,” she said. “I want people to come and see what the students are doing so they can see that the art program is trying to cultivate visually literate, emotionally intelligent, articulate students.”

The art teachers across the district consider the subject a vital part of molding students who are prepared to face the future.

“It is an important part of the holistic education,” Schnyder said. “You can’t do it without math, you can’t do it without English, you can’t do it without science, but you also can’t do it without art.” **RHL**



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Newly discovered flag is a star

Civil War banner was stored and forgotten in town clerk's office

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

An old flag recently discovered in town hall has the requisite 13 stripes symbolizing the original colonies. When it was unrolled, however, there was a surprise.

Instead of the expected stars in a block, there were 34 stars arranged in an unusual star pattern. It was also unexpectedly large, 30 feet by 20 feet. Lisa Zerio, director of parks and recreation, brought the flag to the attention of



Ed Chiucarello, left, president of the Rocky Hill Historical Society, and Robert Herron, town historian, strike a pose. They were excited to learn of a flag dating from the Civil War that had been stored for many years in the town clerk's office.

Photo by Mara Dresner

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This huge flag once flew from a pole in front of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church. The unusual pattern of its 34 stars gives it significant historical value.

Courtesy photo

the Rocky Hill Historical Society earlier this year.
 “Years ago, the then-town manager Barbara Gilbert was given the flag. I do not recall who gave it to the town, but I do remember we opened it

up in the Town Council chambers to look at it and we were very impressed,” she said.
 “It then went into storage in the town clerk’s office for safekeeping. A month or so ago, Town Clerk Stuart

Topliff came to see me and wanted to know what we should do with it. I thought of the town historian and the historical society would be the best place to showcase it and to do further research on the flag,” she added.

“It was very interesting to learn what was uncovered about the flag and its historical importance,” Zerio said.
 It dates from the Civil War era. Research done by Town Historian

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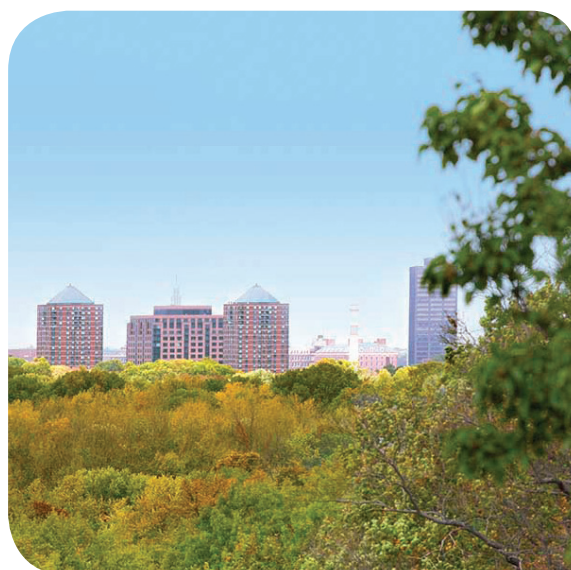
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Robert Herron shows that A.G. Parker bought the flag for the town for \$70 in 1861, which translates to about \$1,600 in 2017 dollars. Parker was postmaster of Rocky Hill at the time.

It is believed the flag was originally made for another town, but never claimed. For 10 years it flew on a 100-foot high pole erected on the triangle in front of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church until the pole was struck by lightning and destroyed.

Parker took custody of the flag and when he died Benjamin Smith, a prosperous farmer, took charge of it. Smith's daughter Adeline Wright then took it and gave it to the Order of American United Mechanics.

When this group ceased to exist, a Griswold family (most likely the Griswolds who owned Sunnycrest Farm on Parsonage Street) took the flag and ultimately gave it to the town clerk around 1931, where it was stored ever since.

Herron said when he first heard about the flag he thought it would be a much more recent one.

"Lisa sent us an email in February of this year that they found this big flag in the town clerk's vault and were we interested. We said, 'Oh yeah.' It's history stuff; we love history stuff," he said.

"We went over there and spread it over the floor of the gym. I expected to find something from World War II. Then we counted the stars. When I got back home, because I'm a compulsive historian, I started researching right away."

In addition to the flag, they also have the material the flag was wrapped in.

"We kept the wrapping. We're historians, we keep everything," Herron said.

He and Ed Chiucarello, president of the historical society, quickly realized they had discovered something special.

"The thing was so big. It's huge. The size was so big. We wondered, 'where did this thing fly?'" Chiucarello said.

The star pattern makes the flag especially unusual. Herron has

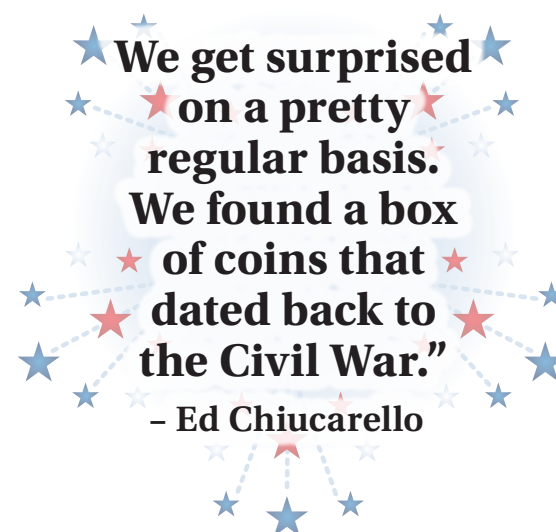
reached out to Yale University to see if he can find out more information about the flag.

"There's a certain sense of patriotism. Bob and I started getting emotional. I even started writing a song," Chiucarello said.

The historical society is in the process of digitizing its collection, both to have an accurate record of what's there and to make it more accessible to the public.

"We're inventorying everything here. We get surprised on a pretty regular basis. We found a box of coins that dated back to the Civil War. I got goose bumps with that one," Chiucarello said.

The two are discussing whether it's possible to display the newly found flag.



"I do not know. Fragile is too strong a word; it's old," Herron said. "What they did in 1917, they just draped it over the front of the grandstand."

They are also researching the proper way to store the flag because it is more than just another artifact.

"We're trying our best here at this society to be scholarly," Chiucarello said.

"Our purpose is to know our past, inspire our present and shape our future. We adopted that purpose last year,"

"It stirs your patriotic juices. Rocky Hill has a hell of a history in the Civil War. Over 100 men went to war out of a population of 800," Herron said. "They're buried over there. This flag was here when they served their country." **RHL**

Learn more about the Rocky Hill Historical Society at rhhistory.org.

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Photos courtesy of Lisa Devine

Kiwi the cow is joined by Sarah Whelan, whose family runs Hayes Farm.

Kiwi the cow checks out the field marked with grid squares. One of those squares would be worth \$1,000 to the lucky winner.

The 4th Annual Cow Chip Raffle, an old-fashioned kind of fundraiser for Rocky Hill High School Project Graduation was held April 29 at Sunny Crest Park. Kiwi the cow from Hayes Farm plopped a cow pie in a grid square purchased in a raffle by a Rocky Hill resident who happens to have a graduating senior.

This lucky winner received a \$1,000 prize. The proceeds of this event –more than \$6,000 – will be used towards the all-night, substance-free graduation celebration for the Class of 2017 sponsored by the Project Graduation parent committee and the town Department of Youth & Family Services.

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All in the family

Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home welcomes third generation to the family business

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Business and family go hand in hand at the Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home in Wethersfield. The establishment recently welcomed the third generation of Sullivans into the fold.

Farley-Sullivan has a long history as a family owned and operated business. Opened in 1943 by Thomas F. and Marguerite Farley, the original funeral home was located on Webster Street in Hartford. Only four years after opening, however, Thomas Farley died in an auto accident.

Unwilling to give up the business, his wife continued to run the

funeral home, hiring a small team of employees to help her including the newly licensed Robert Sullivan Sr. Bob, as he was known, took on the role of managing the operation.

agement of the funeral home.

"We pretty much grew up in it," his son Kevin Sullivan said.

"As kids, we always helped out there," his brother, Tom Sullivan,

**"With him coming in now,
it's going to continue on for
a whole other generation."**

– Tom Sullivan

After Marguerite's death in 1964, he continued to run the business and eventually acquired sole ownership. With the help of his wife, Pat, the Sullivan family began full man-

added. "We were never allowed to go into the private areas, but we helped around where we could, washing cars, transferring flower arrangements, things like that."

As Kevin, Tom and their eldest brother Robert Sullivan Jr., known as Bobby, grew older, they began to take on even greater roles. Bobby was the first in the family to graduate from the American Academy-McAllister Institute of Mortuary Science in New York City in 1970 and he soon joined the business.

A few years later, Kevin followed in his brother's footsteps and graduated from the same program. Tom attended Briarwood College in Southington.

Bob acquired the Sullivan Funeral Home of Glastonbury in 1977, which at the time was no relation to the Hartford facility. With Kevin settling in Glastonbury

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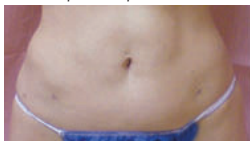


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with his family, the purchase was an obvious choice.

With the addition of three children helping to run things, the business outgrew its Hartford location. They moved to their current facility in 1966, a new 11,000-square-foot building on Beaver Road.

"It was a good fit and it made sense for us to come here," Kevin said.

By the time this location opened each of the brothers had moved out of Hartford. While Kevin remained in Glastonbury, Tom moved his family to Rocky Hill and Bobby settled in Wethersfield.

"Our brother Bobby was one of those guys that everybody knew. He was a very well-liked guy. So was our father," Tom said.

Bob Sr. died in 2005. Bobby died in 2013.

While all of their fathers were part of the funeral business, the next generation had a slightly different experience than Bobby, Kevin and Tom.

"I didn't grow up in it as much as they did," Tom's son, Brendan Sullivan, said. "In high school I used to help my father out sometimes, but that was really it."

Brendan grew up in Rocky Hill and his father was the postmaster here from 2001-2013. After graduating from Rocky Hill High School in 2013, he began thinking about his future career prospects and soon found himself drawn to the family business.

"I just decided this was my true



The Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home welcomed its third generation of Sullivans with Brendan Sullivan, right, joining the business run by his father Tom, center, and uncle Kevin, left. They are shown with a new picture of the family's patriarch, the late Robert Sullivan Sr., who helped to establish the business.

calling," he said.

According to his father, Brendan has always possessed the characteristics of a funeral director. But he was still surprised to hear that his son wanted to join the business.

"We didn't see it coming, but we also weren't surprised when it happened," Tom said. "There's 10 grand-

children in his generation and in our family nobody was ever pressured into the business. We always felt he did have the personality for it, though."

Following in his uncles' footsteps, Brendan began attending AAMI, graduating in December 2016. He passed his state and national

board examinations and is currently completing his apprenticeship before fully joining the firm.

"We are and we always have been a family run place," Tom said. "At some point during a service, they're going to be dealing with someone they know. With him coming in now, it's going to continue on for a whole other generation."

That familial aspect is part of what the Sullivans believe has kept them in business for so long.

"I think what's important for families is that you always see a familiar and friendly face," Brendan said. "Because of our situation, we are able to tailor and cater each service for every family."

He is excited to join the business full time and bring to it his own knowledge and expertise.

"The world is changing and I'd like to bring some modern ideas to it," he said. "It's going to be the same business. In terms of service, I don't plan to change a thing, but maybe modernizing some things."

With Brendan coming aboard as the third generation of Sullivans, Kevin and Tom said they are proud to see what their father helped to establish continuing on.

"We plan on being a family owned and operated business for years to come," Kevin said. **RHL**

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From the Mayor's Desk

Recapping a busy month in Rocky Hill

by Claudia Baio

So many things to share, so little space. Our community has been buzzing with activity and events, including the start of the Central Connecticut Health District walking competition and planning for the Memorial Day Parade.

Once again this year, we welcomed the Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention to town. Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Sean Connolly hosted local mayors and town managers from Rocky Hill, Berlin, Cromwell, Wethersfield and Hartford at the state Veterans Home for a tour and overview of services offered, and resources available, for our veterans and their families, including respite for caregivers.

Interim Town Manager John Mehr and I were among those honored to be in attendance. There are a lot of really great things happening at our Veterans Home and within the Department of Veterans Affairs, including volunteer opportunities. Anyone interested in obtaining more information can obtain it from the website, the Facebook page at CT Veterans Affairs or by contacting the Department of Veterans Affairs or our municipal veterans' representative at town hall.

We are proud to have this facility in our town and thank all the men and women for their service.

A belated happy Mother's Day to all the mothers out there and an early happy Father's Day. On Saturday of Mother's Day weekend I had the pleasure of being a guest reader at the Cora J Belden Library play group. This brought back memories of participating in the program many years ago with my son. Miss Cathy was there even then.

It is such fun to watch the excitement of these youngsters and the quality time with their parents in the fun and supportive setting of this really great program offered by our library. Nice job, Miss Cathy and Miss Robin. Check out the library calendar of events, as there is much to offer for both children and adults.



Mayor Claudia Baio, far right, attended a recent meeting of the Rocky Hill Youth to Youth Coalition.

Courtesy photos

And now on to a topic on everybody's mind. While I wanted to share some of these community events with you to keep you informed of the activities throughout town, let's now turn our attention to an update on the budget. The focus over the course of this past couple of months has been on our budget.

As you know, not just from some of my prior reports but also what we all hear through reports from the state, this promised to be a very difficult budget year, with much beyond our control on the local level.

Interim Town Manager Mehr worked very hard at putting together the first budget presented to the council that started our series of budget workshops.

The local town managers and mayors, including John Mehr and I, have been attending various meetings and receiving consistent updates from various sources including the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Capitol

Region Council of Governments.

CCM members worked together on a bipartisan proposal in an effort to lobby on behalf of the municipalities and the information sharing continues.

Locally, we held budget workshops to provide an opportunity to hear from each of the departments with regards to their budgets and their thought process, as well as to answer any questions that council members had so that ultimately we could get to a point of determining the appropriate adjustments, if any, to be made. The goal, again, was to keep our taxes in check while still ensuring that we could fulfill the financial obligations to keep our town running smoothly and with the goal of not cutting services to our residents.

It is no small job. I am sure I'm not alone among those on the council who spent many hours beyond the hours in public reviewing the budget numbers and budget-related

information. We also need to be careful not to spend down our reserves, but rather to ensure that we still have a cushion to address any potential uncertainties.

We've also been making efforts to ensure that our Capital Improvement Plan is utilized appropriately and to try to avoid the continued problem of having items reach the council level only when they are at a critical point.

In last year's budget, the council included funding for a review of our facilities and to develop a plan to give us a longer-term view on what capital projects we might be facing in the future in order to allow us to plan for that over a series of years.

We are awaiting the results of that review, which will assist developing projections on various projects that may be on the horizon in years to come so that we have more lead time and could plan over the course of years appropriately.

Thank you to our department

heads, and the Board of Education, for their efforts to recognize the challenges of this budget year and trying to put together their proposals and work collaboratively. It was a great team effort.

I thought it might be helpful to address some of the questions that were raised by the public during the course of the hearing. As always, if you have any questions I invite you to send them in. I will continue to try to address your questions in this column.

The issue of the potential problem with the MDC and the concern over whether Rocky Hill and other member towns might have to pay beyond their fair share if Hartford was unable to pay its share generated much discussion. There were many meetings held and information disseminated with the MDC.

Our interim town manager and I attended a number of meetings with the member towns and there were some meetings that included both the town managers and the mayors which I, along with the other local mayors, attended as well. We made our concerns known and

discussed at length the issue with MDC representatives.

Ultimately, as you hopefully are aware, the MDC proposed legislation which did pass and which provides protections to the MDC and consequently to the member towns so that the concern over our having to pay should another member town not pay its share has been alleviated. In short, it is no longer an issue for us.

Despite additional angst in an already difficult process involving some of these issues and in particular some of the difficulties generating from the state budget, by the time you read this column we hope to have already passed our budget despite all of the challenges, keeping our taxes in check and keeping up our level of services.

Thank you to those of you who reached out to express both concerns and support and share your thoughts and ideas. As always, please feel free to contact me. As your mayor, along with the other elected officials, our job is to be here to serve the town and your input is valued and welcomed. **RHL**



Children gather around the mayor as she reads a book to them during the Playgroup Plus program at the Cora J. Belden Library.

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Students of the month

These scholars are leaders at Griswold Middle School

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Dhanush Kalangi and Maitri Gandhi can add a new title to their names – scholar leader.

Every year, two eighth grade students from Griswold Middle School are selected for the statewide Scholar Leader Award. The recognition seeks to honor one male and one female student who are models of excellence in their academics, extracurricular activities and community service.

According to Principal Rick Watson, this year's winners meet and exceed that criteria.

"If you wanted to present a model GMS student, these two would be it," eighth grade social studies teacher Karla Harding said.

The selection process included students submitting essays detailing their academic achievements, extra-

curricular leadership and service to the community. A panel of teachers made the selection after a blind read of the essays.

"They took the names off so the teachers couldn't see who wrote it until after they decided," 14-year-old Dhanush said.

In late April, the two students were called to Watson's office and told that they had been selected as scholar leaders.

"I was shocked because I really didn't think I would get it," Maitri, 13, said. "I was really happy and surprised."

The pair were honored at the Board of Education meeting May 18 and on June 4 they will attend the state Scholar Leader Awards Banquet held by the Connecticut Association of Schools. They will each be able to bring their family as well as a teacher, if they so choose,



Photo by Allie Rivera

Griswold Middle School eighth-graders Maitri Gandhi, left, and Dhanush Kalangi were selected to receive the Scholar Leader Award based on their excellence in academics, extracurricular activities and community service.

to the dinner.

Harding said these two students were most deserving of the honor.

"They're both conscientious students," she said. "They don't want to learn just to get a good grade. They really want to learn."

For Dhanush, education is an important part of life. His favorite subject is math, which he studies both in school and at the Russian School of Mathematics for the past

three years.

"I've always been pretty interested in math," he said.

Dhanush and his classmates are studying quadratic equations at GMS while at the Russian School, which he attends once a week, he is studying algebra 2 and geometry. In addition to those mathematical endeavors, he has also been part of the school's Math Counts club since the sixth grade.

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"It's a club where you practice for a math competition," he said. "We actually made it to the state round this year. It was really competitive."

Outside of school, the 14-year-old student is active in a cultural group called Desis Around Rocky Hill, celebrating his Indian heritage.

"Every year there's a big celebration," Dhanush said. "I usually participate in organizing the event and collecting tickets."

He has been part of this organization, which meets in different places around town, for the past five years and said it is important to him.

"It's a good way to be with my community and help out," he said.

Music is also a large part of the eighth-grader's life. He has played the piano for the last four years and competed at the New England Music Festival for the past two years. This year he earned third place recognition and last year he earned first place.

"I just like music," he said. "I usually play more classical."

Dhanush also competes in tennis tournaments at the Tennis and Fitness Center of Rocky Hill and plays competitive chess. He was named the teen state champion in April.

During his free time, he enjoys spending time outside cycling with

friends or being with his younger brother, Niteesh, 11.

Maitri, 13, keeps a similarly busy life with a large focus on her education. She loves all of her classes and her favorite subjects are language arts and social studies, where students were studying the industrial revolution.

"I find it so interesting how everything ties together," she said. "It's never just one factor that starts something. There are so many different pieces."

In her language arts classes Maitri and her fellow students have been reading Shakespeare, including "Hamlet" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

She has taken the lessons she's learned from her reading and begun applying them to her own writing. She enjoys writing fictional short stories and previously wrote for her school's newspaper club.

"I like to write a lot," she said. "I love the way you can use words to move people."

In addition to expressing herself through written word, Maitri has also expressed herself through song. She has been part of the school's chorus since the fifth grade and performed with the drama club in two of its productions, including as a fairy in "Sleeping

Beauty" two years ago.

"I'd never done anything like it so I thought it was something new I should try," she said of her decision to audition. "It was fun. I was glad I did it."

Outside of school, Maitri is active in her karate dojo, where she has been practicing twice a week for two years.

"I like that I get to use my strength and you learn self-defense," she said.

form of dance that she has been studying for five years.

"It's a really old form of dance," she explained. "You have to have a very hard, poised stance, so it's different from a lot of modern types of dances."

Maitri also takes art classes.

"I take classes but I also do it in my free time," she said. "I think I'm most proud of my paintings."

Being able to give back to others is an important part of her life. The

"These two are both model students. They participate and they raise the level of discourse among their peers."

- Karla Harding

This year Maitri and her younger brother Jai, 10, also began to take ice skating lessons at the Newington arena.

"It was something new. I'd never done anything like this before. I don't even know how to roller skate," she said with a laugh. "The first class, we literally held onto the side railings the whole time."

Maitri's Indian culture is also important to her. She takes classes in Bharatnatyam, a classical Indian

eighth-grader has volunteered at the Cora J. Belden Library, various soup kitchens in Middletown, the youth service community garden in Rocky Hill and raised funds for an organization providing education to women and children in India.

"I like feeling like I'm helping people," Maitri said.

"These two are both model students," Harding said. "They participate and they raise the level of discourse among their peers." **RHL**

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RHS students receive notoriety for academic performance

The following students were named to the honor roll for the third quarter at Rocky Hill High School.

High Honors

Grade 12

Aliyan Ahmed, Ashley Bezdelovs, Samantha Brady, Vanessa Cardillo, Amanda Carducci, Vincent Cassarino, Mark Catania, Cameron Cheyney, Alicia Dabek, Timothy Davis, Shannon Duffy, Marie Everludys, Sarah Freitas, Michelino Gali, Melissa Gamonal, Nicolas Garry-Benco, Evan Gauvin, Joseph Goodrich, Justin Hock, Erin Kelly, Cristina LoGiudice, Peter Lucente, JoDee Lupacchino, Julia Machaj, Kristina Machaj, Robert Machaj, Salvatore Madera, Summer Marshall, Tatyana Martinez, Ricky Montalvo, Arianna Morabito, Bailey O'Connell, Austin Pavelec, James Pitchell, Thomas Powell-Brown, Giuseppe Russo, Alana Rychlec, Sarina Santos, Kajal Shah, Nicole Shank, Stephen Shepard, Alexander Sikorski, Ethan Simard, Michael Simons, Monserrat Sousa-Sanchez, Caroline Sullivan, Joseph Sullivan, Gabriel Walerysiak, Emily Whelan and Joseph Young.

Grade 11

Sydney Aberbach, Joseph Catania, Daniel Cavallaro, Adan Cecunjanin, Nicole Chamberland, Shelby Cios, Stephen DeNardo, Matthew Emmanuel, Sarah Erkson, Torah Ferree, Alexandra Fishberg, Cole Fishberg, Grace Fisher, Jared Friday, Katrina Granovskiy, Michael Griswold, Zirui Hao, Madison Hussey, Sana Kasmani, Grace Lang, Anika Lawrence, Rachel Longo, Ioannis Mastorakis, Christiana Montalbano, Grace Moore, Madelyn Morse, Bree O'Connor, Seyed-Arash Safavi, Sabrina Sokaitis, Samantha Steinman, Katherine Stockman, Nicole Talavera Medina, John Woolley and Emily Zarrilli.

Grade 10

Pavan Adapa, Anthony Albano, Tomasz Baliga, Gulnaz Bhura, Jordyn Bowler, Gabriela Brown, Adam Buerk, Thien-Kim Tien Bui,

Rachel Calcagni, Daniella Castanho, Anel Cecunjanin, Sharanya Chandu, Alisha Chhabra, Daniel Yong Cho, Christopher Conlan, Andre Costa, Megan Creevy, Lilah Devine, Julia DiBattista, Victoria DiLoreto, Katarzyna Drozdal, Shae Duffy, Morgan Felice, Ryan Figueiredo, Felicity Frate, Mihir Gowda, Leah Graf, Lea Chao Grant, Alexandra Gwara, Melissa Hiller, Charles Hilton, James Huddleston, Maya Kugel, Pranjali Kulkarni, Benjamin Lukens, Nicole Lukens, Miguel Madera, Kate Masciadrelli, Emma Molloy, Pulkit Nagpal, Julia O'Connor, Alexandra Parks, Lauren Pattison, Aaron Pavelec, Haley Pavelec, Molly Pawlak, Angelika Ptak, Hasham Haq Rauf, Julia Rosa, Robert Rosa, Nijaz Salihovic, Amanda Schuman, Spencer Shepard, Sarah Simard, Karalina Valente, Venanzio Weeks, Anne White and Kellie Williams.

Grade 9

Fajer Aftab, Mia Aglieco, Nikhileshwar Anaparthi, Aidan Antiporda, Ethan Arcata, Olivia Binaco, Athea Bonamico, Kyle Bouchard, Thien-Bao Ngoc Bui, Scott Burness, Talia Carlone, Talia Chandra, Connor Choptij, Vikram Chowdhury, Julia Ciarcia, Jonathan Cichowicz, Gabrielle Dahbour, Yuanlong Nguyen Dai, Kanisha Dimple Desai, Nichole Detushev, Grace Famiglietti, Nicholas Faraci, Crista Fiala, Justin Fraleigh, Adam Franzen, Karoline Gawron, Ohm Ghutadaria, Elaina Giansanti, Kinshu Gupta, Gabriella Horta, Hussey, Tyler Jaiswal, Archisha Jaiswal, Allison Hyunah Jo, Daria Kokic, Alexander Koskovich, Isabela Lebron-Rivera, Katelyn Longo, Lynda Lyn, Sarah McGowan, Margaret Montalto, Isabella Montalvo, Savannah Muzio, Riya Gautam Naik, Audrey Nelson-Mbiah, Brandon Onyejekwe, Ianna Pagan, Krisha Patel, Nishi Kalpesh Patel, Parth Patel, Milan Amul Patlikh, Kaylie Pavel, Christina Petrini, Matthew Rados, Jake Rajotte, Annalyn Ricci-Cohen, Emily Rostkowski, Maya Salamone, Keya Saxena, Brandon

Scacca, Jay Scacca, Madeline Stevens, Elizabeth Stockman, Georgia Symeoudakis, Taylor Tenerowicz, My Ngoc Tran, Lydia Tzickas, Alexia Vassallo, Erika Watson, Nicole Zarrilli, Sarah Zarrilli and Sofia Zhuk-Vasilyeva.

Academic Honors

Grade 12

Rahul Abraham, Camilo Ayala Chica, Kristopher Begen, Karis Bergen, Francois Bourdier Rosario, Taylor Bowler, Christina Braun, Nam Tien Bui, Alexia Burns, Dante Carlone, Patrick Cella, Jay Karan Chandran, Brooke Chao, Connor Charamut, Isabella Colasacco, Chris Corbin, Luke Devine, Maya Eisenhaur, Zykeya Ford, Ryan Fraleigh, Allison Grover, Christopher Hansen, Hunter Held, Erin Hourihan, Arlindi Hoxha, Nico Karabetsos, Madeline Kovanda, Fotos Kroji, Emily Louro, Krystal Macca, Prarthana Patel, Riley Pickett, Ariana Ramos, Amber Rehman, Devyn Rockefeller, Miguel Rodriguez, Kyle Rosenberg, Stephanie Sampaio, Anthony Sapia-Banas, David Scalise, Julia Simboski, Brianna St. Georges, Katherine Sullivan, Daniel Tonna and Ryan Wolf.

Grade 11

Victoria Acca, Marisa Anderson, Rojina Bashyal, Victoria Bower, Brendan Boyle, Luke Brennan, Emma Brownstein, Sabrina Capasso, Dillon Cerpa, James Chasco-Dimauro, Kristen Costello, Jordan DelMastro, Andrew DiMatteo, Thomas DiMatteo, Michelle Dougherty, Luis Feliciano, Joseph Ferreira, Connor Gagne, Gina Genovese, Salvatore Gentile, Gino Giansanti, Arian Ajit Gokhale, Isabella Hassan, Sophie Kurdziel, Matthew Lanciotto, Marc LaPuma, Kiana Lebron-Rivera, Jonathan Lu, Gabriella Mezzio, Adelina Miceli, Kevin Moise, Tyler Morgan, Eesha Nasir, Sonalia Neemcharan, Nathaniel Hyun Woo Nicholson, Kruti Rakesh Patel, Colin Pavel, Szymon Ptak, Ryan Robinson, Rachel

Roncaioli, Madison Santo, Alexiana Scata, Brigid Schulenburg, Reva Lakshmi Shah, Brian Speers, Jonathan Tefoe, Brenna Tweedy, Joseph Twigg, John Uricchio, Luke Vassallo, Crystal Vinci, Dylan Walsh, Jacob Weber, William White and Wiktoria Zduniak.

Grade 10

Colin Amo, Hailey Anderson, Muhammed Bilal, John Blair, Meagan Caesar, Arijan Cekic, Adam Chao, Chloe Colandrea, Caleb Cronin, Victoria Czubat, Nicole D'Angelo, Christian D'Eliseo, Morgan DeCarlo, Viviana Delgado, Connor Devanney, Dominic DiBlasi, Nesla Megi Disha, Kyler Florer, Kaylynn Friss, Michelle Galdamez, Nathan Gerace-Hicks, Emily Geremia, Ernestina Gyamfi, Olena Herasym, David Hofmann, Brett Kiesel, Zafeer Yasin Kolia, Renee Kraft, Antwine Lee, Alexandra Lopez, Francis Malabanan, Anxhela Mete, Alyssa Morabito, Julisbeth Negron-Carrasquillo, Prem Bharatkumar Patel, Griffin Pickett, Skyler Pitchell, Anna Riedinger, Ashley Scacca, Tyler Schiavone, Fiza Shahid, Lillian Spada, Brenna Sweeney, Liliana Trujillo, Christa Tucker, Sophie Twigg and Syrina Williams.

Grade 9

Arbaz Afzal, Olivia Augeri, Evan Barilla, Austin Bouchard, Ryan Boyle, Anela Cekic, Nicholas Cella, Avani Swadesh Chhabra, Isabella Cimini, Nicole Costa, Robert Degree, Emma Drumm, Matthew Durkin, Annabella Ensign, Matthew Fisher, Jason Freitas, Paige Garrity, Jordan Glover, Mallika Rakesh Joshi, Angelica Kolakowski, Amila Korkutovic, Jason LaTorra, Amber Lombardo, Salvatore Lonero, Michael Lopez, Emily Marchand, Kyle Martin, Anna Marie Montalto, Abigail Murray, Marina Nanci, Michael Pantano, Julia Pawlich, Aleksa Peterson, Plakunov, Nicholas Michael Ptak, Julia Rizzo, Ryan Robb, Matthew Sapia-Banas, Bailey Savery, Benjamin Smith, Corrin Stabile, Liam Sullivan, Luke Thurz, Jeremy Walker, Nathalie Wallace and Konnor Walsh. **RHL**

LIFE of E's

by Elaine M. Decker

One of the wonderful things about living in the Rocky Hill area is that fresh local produce is available throughout much of the year. From the end of May through early November, the choices are sublime. I like to support local businesses and scouting the markets and stands in the area can be entertaining.

Some of the items I've uncovered have been new to me, not to mention strange. They're like that

Cheez-It commercial where the quality control guy is assessing the maturity of the cheese wheel. The cheese interrupts; it has attitude. So does some of our local produce. It's beyond fresh. It's sassy! It stops you in your tracks, insisting: "Pick me!"

I confess that I'm not much of a cook, although I can toss a mean green salad. But I can never decide which greens to purchase.



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The markets usually have red curly lettuce and green curly, adorable little bibb and stodgy romaine. If I arbitrarily pick one of the ample curls, the bibb calls out: "No! Take me!" and I oblige. Then the romaine grumbles: "What's wrong with me? You like to layer my leaves with a slice of turkey and a piece of Swiss to make non-bread rollups at lunchtime." And that, friends, is how I wind up with three heads of lettuce in my canvas tote.

It doesn't get easier when it comes to fresh tomatoes, which can be found in red, yellow, green, and even purple and zebras, not to mention the different shapes and sizes. Does it matter whether I expect to eat them raw or cook them? You've probably guessed that I don't plan ahead on menus. Will I be slicing them, or cutting them into wedges? Or popping them into my mouth as I stand in front of the open refrigerator, wondering what's for dinner. In my world, a big selection is not always a good thing.

My go-to location for produce all week long is Fair Weather Acres on Cromwell Avenue. It's open from mid-April through November, with produce appearing at the end of May. In addition to the usual suspects, this outlet carries weird looking veggies like kohlrabi, and at least three types of local corn in season. In late fall you'll find a variety of

root vegetables, such as celeriac. They also sell delicious pies, terrific ice cream in unusual flavors (try Moose Tracks and Bear Claws) and a curious array of non-edibles. And lots of plants.

Their tomato harvest seems to go on forever. Late fall, a sign will appear: "Last Tomatoes of the Season." I buy a few and put them in paper bags to ripen at home. A week later, voilà! More have shown up. So I buy more. You can never have too many tomatoes. Especially if your go-to meal is a tossed green salad.

Fair Weather offers a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. CSAs connect local growers to consumers, who pay in advance for shares of the farms' harvests to help farmers plan better and keep costs down. Fair Weather doesn't use genetically modified seed. They follow an intense IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program and are GAP certified (Good Agricultural Practices). Check out their new website: fairweatheracres.com 860-529-6755.

Though it's a tad farther from me, I've also stopped at Gilbert Farm, a family farm with strong ties to Rocky Hill. It's hard to miss their large, rustic cart-like display at the corner of Elm Street and Gilbert Avenue. Depending on the season, among other things, you'll see flowering plants, a colorful array of tomatoes and several varieties of

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squash. Towards the end of summer, it's overflowing with corn.

I learned something useful about bell peppers from their Facebook page. As with puppies, to tell what sex a pepper is, look at its bottom. The fact that peppers have sexes was news to me, and it makes me wonder what goes on in those fields at night. If the pepper has four bumps, it's female; three bumps, it's male. Females have more seeds and they're sweeter. Get females if you plan to eat them raw; buy males for cooking. You can thank me later for this tip. 860-571-0373

A while ago I read in the New York Times that vegetables have their own seasons within our normal four. The writer, Melissa Clark, called it "micro-seasonality." Each vegetable can go through all its mircoseasons within one calendar season. Our local farmers markets are a great place to observe this in progress.

Take tomatoes, for example. According to Clark, they start out "hard and green and mildly acidic" (like the "me" of my youth). She describes tomatoes throughout their

growing period, ending with this: the "later-season specimen... has had a chance to grow fatter. The flesh gets flabby, the seeds larger and more distracting."

Seriously. Is she describing a tomato? Or is she talking about my neck wattle, my wing flaps and my age spots? This weighs on me every time I look at tomatoes at a farm stand. I no longer reject the ones that are misshapen or have a brown spot or two. I wonder whether Clark knows how to tell the sex of a bell pepper. **RHL**

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Elaine M. Decker's books include Retirement Sparks, Retirement Sparks Again, Retirement Sparks Redux and CANCER: A Coping Guide. Her essays appear in the anthologies: 80 Things To Do When You Turn Eighty and 70 Things To Do When You Turn Seventy. All are available on Amazon.com. She's also been featured in ReaderSupportedNews.org. Contact her at: Elaine.Decker@alumni.Brown.edu.



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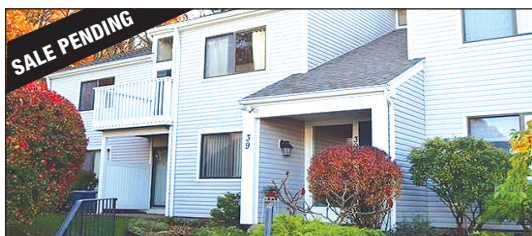
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Real Estate

BRAND NEW APARTMENTS HOMES AVAILABLE AT THE OLD TALCOTT MILL APARTMENTS IN VERNON, CT www.talcottmill.com

Historic Talcott Mill, LLC, through its Managing Agent DeMarco Management Corporation, is pleased to announce the new housing opportunity available at Old Talcott Mill. Applications are now being accepted and the property is anticipated to be ready for occupancy in June 2017. Old Talcott Mill is a Workforce Development Housing Community located at 47 Main Street in Vernon, CT within the Talcott Historic District in Vernon, CT. The rehabilitation of Talcott Brothers' Mill offers eighty three (83) residential units. Units will be offered to individuals and families having an annual household income at and not exceeding 60% of the HUD AMI for Tolland County. Income Limit Restrictions Apply. Applications are available at DeMarco Management Corporation in person at 117 Murphy Road in Hartford, CT; by phone (860) 951-9411; by contacting the ATT Relay number 711 or via email at info@talcottmill.com. Applications will not be available at the Property.

The residential space includes a mix of differently sized studio, one bedroom, and two bedroom apartments with rents starting at \$886 - \$1122 with heat and hot water included in the rents. The property offers spacious unique floor plans, fully-applianced kitchens, on-site laundry facilities, fitness room, central air, accessible units, community room and Historic Mill Exhibition.

This development is financed through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), receives state grant funds from the Department of Housing (DOH), with State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Income Restrictions Apply.



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SUMMER living

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Summer *Living*

Try something new

Adventuresome
cures for
a summertime
slumpby Nancy Thompson
LIFE Staff

The lazy, hazy days of summer. They're fun, except that all that laziness could easily slide into boring. No worries, though. We have lots of great ideas to inject some adventure into one's life.

In the trees

Storrs Adventure Park

First, there are ropes courses with a twist.

Visitors navigate through platforms in the trees – connected by bridges made of cable, wood, rope and zip lines – that form aerial trails. They're color-coded by difficulty, ranging from beginner to advanced.

Climbers receive a safety orientation and wear climbing harnesses at all times. Guides are on hand throughout the courses.

Say "Storrs" and most people will think of the University of Connecticut. But it is also home to the Storrs Adventure Park, a forest climbing park where visitors can

experience adventure in the trees.

In all, the park has 15 zip lines, four difficulty levels and more than 100 bridges.

Tickets are available for two- and three-hour admissions, for groups of 10 or more, and for two-hour birthday parties. Prices vary by age and activity and range from \$22 for two hours for a college student with ID to \$47 for a three-hour climb for visitors age 12 and older.

The park is open daily through September 4, Sunday from 9 a.m. to 8

p.m., Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Storrs Adventure Park is located at 2007 Storrs Road, Storrs. More information at storrsadventurepark.com, 860-946-0606 or info@storrsadventurepark.com

Nomads Outdoor Adventure

Nomads Outdoor Adventure offers another treetop experience.

The South Windsor park, which

claims to be the newest and most exciting such attraction, has six courses and more than 70 aerial challenges for visitors of varying abilities.

Tickets are available for three-hour sessions and range from \$28 to \$38 depending on age.

A night climb/twilight special is available Sunday through Thursday during the park's last two hours at a discounted rate.

During the summer, the park is open daily from 10 a.m. until dark.

Nomads Outdoor Adventure is



Zippering above the surface of the water is one of many adventures at Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park in Portland

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located at 240 Governors Highway, South Windsor. More information at nomadsadventurequest.com, 860-290-1117 or info@nomadsadventurequest.com.

In the air

Fearless Flyers Academy

Learn to fly through the air, with or without the greatest of ease, at the Fearless Flyers Academy in Mystic. The school also offers classes in trampoline gymnastics, aerial fitness and a variety of aerial fabric activities.

Two-hour trapeze lessons, the academy's most popular, teach students how to perform many of the tricks they've seen at a circus and is available to everyone, from novices to accomplished gymnasts.

The classes are open to everyone from children age 6 and older. No prior experience is necessary, but there is a 180-pound limit.

Students in trampoline gymnastics classes learn proper techniques and skills, using safety-harness systems, crash mats and other safety equipment seldom found in traditional trampoline parks.

Again, no experience is necessary, and the classes are open to anyone six and older.

Aerial fitness classes focus on strength, conditioning and flexibility in the areas that aerialists use most, especially shoulders, back and core muscles. Other classes include aerial fabrics, aerial static trapeze and aerial hoops. There's also a class that teaches students how to become a catcher, the person who snags the trapeze flyer in the air.

Fearless Flyers Academy is located at 800 Flanders Road, Mystic. More

information at info@fearlesstrapeze.com, 860-245-4154 or info@FearlessTrapeze.com.

Flight Trampoline Park

Flight Trampoline Park in New Britain has more than 13,000 square feet with 31 trampolines, including a dedicated area gives children 6 and younger. It offers open jump sessions, special activities include Club Flight with lasers, and dodgeball.

Mondays from 4 to 9 p.m. are designated as family nights, and Tuesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. are set aside for visitors with special needs. Admission fees vary by activity and age, with discounts on family nights and special needs nights.

Flight Trampoline Park is located at 140 Production Court, New Britain. More information at flighttrampolinepark.com/Hartford, 860-505-8218 or hartford.info@flighttrampolinepark.com.

Soarin' Indoors

This Manchester attraction has two aerial ropes courses, one that is 2.5 feet off the ground and another 12 feet up. Both have similar challenges, such as rope bridges, cargo nets, swings and zip lines. Young guests, who must be tall enough to reach 60 inches while standing flat on the floor, will negotiate a series of increasingly difficult challenges.

Harnesses and cables are used for safety, and trained guides walk around the course to offer help when needed.

Soarin' Indoors has a two-story playscape in the course room that is available for anyone climbing on the adventure course and also as a separate purchase for younger guests who



Riding an oversized tube down three whitewater rapids is only part of the fun at Farmington River Tubing in New Hartford

aren't yet ready for the courses. The playscape is divided into a toddler area for children age 1 to 4 and a regular play area for older children.

The facility is open for individuals, groups, corporate events and private parties.

Admission costs \$13.95 for children 12 and younger and \$18.95 for visitors 13 and older.

Soarin' Indoors is open Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Tuesdays.

Soarin' Indoors is located at 422 North Main Street, Manchester.

More information at soarindoors.com, 860-645-1595.

In and on the water

Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park

Ever thought about jumping off a cliff? You can do it – safely – at this adventure center in one of the biggest

brownstone quarries in the world.

The park, near the Connecticut River in Portland, also offers 14 zip lines and an extreme rope swing as well as swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, wall-climbing, wakeboarding and, for certified divers, scuba diving.

The cliff heights vary, so beginners can immerse themselves gradually. The "ultimate extreme rope swing" can launch adventuresome visitors more than 20 feet out into the water. The more challenging wall climbs go up more than 70 feet, but there also are a few relatively easy climbs for the less skilled or less brave.

The park offers three wakeboard runs, two for beginners and one dedicated to more advanced riders. Kayaks, paddle boards, and other human-powered vehicles and toys are available to rent. The park has also become a popular destination for area dive centers to bring students, and for qualified divers to train and use

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Summer *Living*

underwater platforms.

Admission fees depend on activities, with \$26 for a general swimming pass, \$36 for an adventure sports pass, and \$46 for a wakeboard adventure sports pass.

Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park is located at 161 Brownstone Avenue, Portland. More information at Brownstonepark.com, 866-860-0208.

Tubing on the Farmington River

The idea of floating on an oversized tube doesn't sound like an adventure, but Farmington River Tubing's 2.5-mile ride through three sets of white-water rapids is enough to get riders' hearts thumping.

The \$20 fee, which must be paid in cash, includes the rental of a specially designed tube, a life jacket and a shuttle bus ride from the take-out point back to the starting point. Riders can tube again the same day for an additional \$10. Changing houses and restrooms are available.

It's a good idea to check ahead to get information about hours and river conditions.

Hours vary depending on weather and other factors. Tubing is tentatively available through the middle of June weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., depending on weather. The attraction is open from the middle of June through late August daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and late August through Labor Day weekends

from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekdays, dependent on weather and staffing, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. After Labor Day through the middle of September, riders must call for hours and river conditions.

Farmington River Tubing is located at 92 Main Street, New Hartford. More information at Farmingtonrivertubing.com, 860-693-6465.

In the extreme

Empower Leadership & Adventure Center

Empower Leadership & Adventure Center uses terms such as "special agent," heart-pumping, extreme, exhilarating and adrenaline-inducing to describe the activities at its Middletown facility.

The zip line canopy adventure includes a fully guided half-mile journey 40 to 75 feet up in the tree tops, five zip lines ranging from 200 to 650 feet long, two adventure sky bridges and two high ropes climbing challenges.

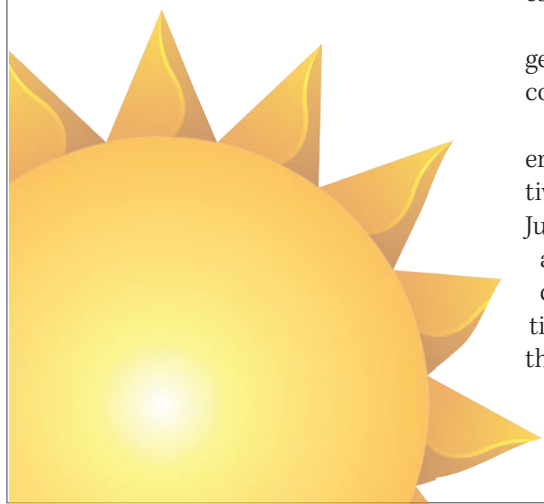
Participants in the map-and-

compass scavenger hunt will piece together clues, find hidden challenges and and overcome obstacles.

Commando rappelling, a special operations adventure and the "Survivor 101 adventure" add an extra element to participants' experiences. Other activities include partner-assisted tree climbing, a four-hour tree-top zip line adventure, an aerial discovery adventure combining zip lines and tree-climbing, a deluxe adventure that combines three challenges into one, parties, and group outings for adults and youths.

The office is open daily during the summer from 8:30 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. The earliest tour usually leaves between 9 and 9:30 a.m., and the latest tour leaves around 5 or 6 p.m. In the fall, the schedule switches to Tuesday through Sunday.

Empower Leadership & Adventure Center is located at 2011 South Main Street, Middletown. More information at Leadershipsports.com, 860-638-4754 or Office@leadershipsports.com. **RHL**





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Summer *Living*

Spark a new interest

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

The summer season is the time to step out of comfort zones

With the warm days of summer approaching, some may find themselves yearning to break out of their typical routine to try something new.

In addition to often simply being enjoyable, trying new activities can also have positive benefits on mental and emotional well-being. According to a post

on Psychology Today by Dr. Alex Lickerman, breaking out of a comfort zone often requires a level of courage and forces participants to grow.

For others still, looking to try new things can allow people to create experiences they may have always wanted to try, by picking up a paintbrush or spatula, flying in a hot air balloon or riding a horse.

Culinary classes

For those who wish to experience something new but wish to stay a bit closer to their comfort zone, Sur La Table in Canton offers a variety of hands-on cooking classes every day throughout the year.

"It's really geared toward home cooks just for a new experience, maybe to try some new techniques," culinary lead Trace Alford said. "They're enjoyable, they're fun and they're a great learning experience."

The classes range in topics from Pizza on the Grill and Exploring Italy to baking courses Easy as Pie

and French Croissants 101.

"It's a great way to try new things if you aren't familiar with certain cuisines," Alford said. "A lot of people aren't sure about the Thai classes, but most of them then are very impressed because they never realized that it's not as difficult as they thought."

In addition to learning a new skill in the classes, Alford said that he has seen people start to treat the class as a social bonding time.

"A lot of people come for the social component," he said. "There's definitely bonding that happens. I think there are some who even meet in the class and then agree to come to another class together."

Work of art

While the art of cooking is one arena to explore,

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Summer *Living*



this region also has a variety of art for people to try.

"It's great to try just for the new experience," Farmington Valley Arts Center board member and artist in residence Carol Kaplan said. "We really have something for everybody."

The center offers a variety of classes in different mediums ranging from beginner levels to advanced techniques.

"We have a few exploration-type classes which are for people who think, 'Gee, I wonder if I really like clay. I'll take a couple classes just to see what it's about,'" Kaplan explained. "We also have folks who've had some experience and they want to hone their skills and take it to the next level. It really is something for everyone in a place that can be as rigorous as you want."

The Farmington Valley Arts Center has 18 studios where artists

create on a daily basis and Kaplan encourages people to go see what is being made.

"You can come to appreciate art, you can make art or you can watch someone creating it," she said.

The center also offers small classrooms where students can get direct instruction and feedback on their work, but according to Kaplan, it is the atmosphere created there that sets this space apart.

"For many people it's difficult to even get the process started," she said. "You have to feel that it's a safe place for that to happen, and we work to do that."

In many instances, Kaplan said that she has seen new students breathe a sigh of relief the first time they pick up a paintbrush.

"You can almost feel like this exhale," she said. "I think in this increasingly screen- and tech-filled

world, just to put your hands in clay, that tactile experience, is very valuable."

Horseback riding

"We have some people come who just want to check it off their bucket list," said Sharon Morin of Hillside Stable in Glastonbury. "A lot of people that haven't ridden before, even the older ones, say it's something they've always wanted to do."

Horseback riding at Hillside Stable is an option for people of all ages and any experience level.

"There's not really too much they need to know beforehand," Morin said. "They need to come with boots with heels and long pants, and we provide the helmets."

Hillside Stable is a small, family-run business. Morin said that her two daughters and niece run the stable, teach lessons and encourage people to try the activity if they never have before.

"A lot of people really enjoy it," Morin said. "Everybody here is friendly and patient, and it's always good to try a new thing."

Adult education

Those looking to try something new but are unsure what exactly is available to them need look no further than their local adult education programs.

"We have something for everyone," Ruth Kozlowski, enrichment program coordinator for West Hartford Adult Education, said. "We have ongoing classes and we just announced a lot of day trips coming up."

Through West Hartford Adult Education, people can take classes in anything ranging from yoga to movie

discussions to cookie decorating.

"One of our more popular ones is an Asian market tour and dumpling workshop," Kozlowski said. "One of our instructors takes people to a local Asian supermarket and afterwards they go back to where her husband and she own a tai chi academy and make dumplings."

Those looking to have a one-day experience can peruse the organization's variety of day trips, including an upcoming Titanic History tour in New York City June 3.

"They'll be seeing all these historic buildings related to people who were on the Titanic," Kozlowski explained.

Other upcoming trips include Saratoga horse racing, a tour of the Hudson Valley wineries and a Narragansett Bay Lighthouse cruise.

Regardless of what new activity is explored, people are encouraged to try something new.

"You never know if you'll find out that you really love something," Morin said. **RHL**

Hillside Stable is located at 524 Bell St., Glastonbury. Call 860-748-1894 or visit online at www.hillsidestable.net.

Sur La Table is located at 110 Albany Turnpike #609, Canton. Call 860-693-9560 or visit online at www.sur-latable.com.

The Farmington Valley Arts Center is located at 25 Arts Center Lane, Avon. Call 860-678-1867 or visit online at www.artsfvac.org.

West Hartford Adult Education is located at 50 South Main St., West Hartford. Call 860-561-6900 or visit online at www.whlifelearn.org.

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Buena Vista Afternoon Camp

for ages 6-14

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National Country Cooking Month
National Dairy Month
National Iced Tea Month
National Papaya Month
National Soul Food Month

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- 2 National Rocky Road Day
- 2 National Doughnut Day
- 3 National Chocolate Macaroon Day
- 3 National Egg Day
- 4 National Cheese Day
- 4 National Cognac Day
- 5 National Veggie Burger Day
- 5 National Gingerbread Day
- 5 National Moonshine Day
- 6 National Applesauce Cake Day
- 7 National Chocolate Ice Cream Day
- 8 National Name Your Poison Day
- 9 National Strawberry Rhubarb Pie Day
- 10 National Herbs and Spices Day

- 10 National Iced Tea Day
- 10 National Black Cow Day
- 10 National Rosé Day
- 11 National Corn on the Cob Day
- 11 National German Chocolate Cake Day
- 12 National Peanut Butter Cookie Day
- 12 National Jerky Day
- 14 National Strawberry Shortcake Day
- 14 National Bourbon Day
- 15 National Lobster Day
- 16 National Fudge Day
- 17 National Apple Strudel Day
- 17 National Eat Your Vegetables Day
- 17 National Cherry Tart Day
- 18 National Turkey Lovers' Day
- 19 National Martini Day
- 20 National Ice Cream Soda Day
- 20 National Vanilla Milkshake Day
- 21 National Peaches 'n' Cream Day
- 22 National Chocolate Eclair Day
- 22 National Onion Rings Day
- 23 National Pecan Sandies Day
- 24 National Pralines Day
- 25 National Catfish Day
- 25 National Strawberry Parfait Day
- 26 National Chocolate Pudding Day
- 29 National Almond Buttercrunch Day
- 30 National Bomb Pop Day (that red, white and blue Popsicle)

July

National Baked Bean Month
National Culinary Arts Month
National Grilling Month
National Horseradish Month
National Hot Dog Month
National Ice Cream Month
National July Belongs to Blueberries Month

- 1 National Creative Ice Cream Flavors Day
- 1 National Gingersnap Day
- 2 National Anisette Day
- 3 National Fried Clam Day
- 3 National Eat Your Beans Day
- 3 National Chocolate Wafer Day

- 4 National Barbecued Spareribs Day
- 4 National Caesar Salad Day
- 5 National Apple Turnover Day

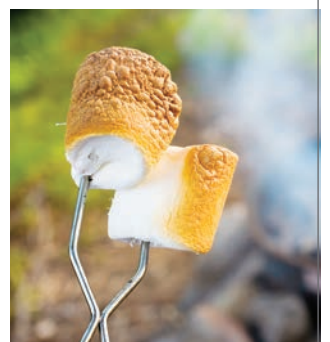
- 5 National Graham Cracker Day
- 6 National Fried Chicken Day
- 7 National Strawberry Sundae Day
- 7 National Macaroni Day
- 8 National Chocolate with Almonds Day
- 9 National Sugar Cookie Day
- 10 National Piña Colada Day
- 11 National Rainier Cherry Day
- 11 National Blueberry Muffin Day
- 11 National Mojito Day
- 12 National Pecan Pie Day
- 12 Eat Your Jello Day
- 13 National French Fry Day
- 13 National Beans 'n' Franks Day
- 14 National Grand Marnier Day
- 14 National Mac and Cheese Day
- 15 National Strawberry Rhubarb Day
- 15 National Tapioca Pudding Day
- 16 National Corn Fritters Day
- 16 National Ice Cream Day
- 17 National Peach Ice Cream Day
- 18 National Sour Candy Day
- 18 National Caviar Day
- 19 National Daiquiri Day
- 19 National Hotdog Day
- 20 National Lollipop Day
- 21 National Junk Food Day
- 22 National Penuche Fudge Day
- 23 National Vanilla Ice Cream Day
- 24 National Tequila Day
- 25 National Hot Fudge Sundae Day
- 26 National Bagelfest Day
- 26 National Coffee Milkshake Day
- 27 National Scotch Day
- 27 National Crème Brûlée Day
- 27 National Chili Dog Day
- 28 National Milk Chocolate Day
- 29 National Lasagna Day
- 29 National Chicken Wing Day
- 30 National Cheesecake Day
- 31 National Raspberry Cake Day

August

National Catfish Month
National Peach Month
National Coffee Month
National Goat Cheese Month

- 1 National Raspberry Cream Pie Day
- 2 National Ice Cream Sandwich Day
- 3 National Watermelon Day
- 3 National Grab Some Nuts Day
- 4 National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
- 5 National Oyster Day
- 5 National Jamaican Patty Day
- 5 National Mustard Day
- 5 Mead Day
- 6 National Root Beer Float Day
- 7 National Raspberries 'n' Cream Day
- 8 National Frozen Custard Day
- 9 National Rice Pudding Day
- 10 National S'mores Day
- 11 National Raspberry Bombe Day
- 12 National Julienne Fries Day
- 13 National Prosecco Day
- 13 National Filet Mignon Day
- 14 National Creamsicle Day
- 15 National Lemon Meringue Pie Day
- 16 National Rum Day
- 18 National Fajita Day
- 18 National Ice Cream Pie Day
- 19 National Soft Ice Cream Day
- 20 National Chocolate Pecan Pie Day
- 21 National Spumoni Day
- 22 National Bao Day (small Chinese steamed buns with filling)
- 22 National Pecan Torte Day
- 23 National Sponge Cake Day
- 24 National Peach Pie Day
- 24 National Waffle Day
- 25 National Whiskey Sour Day
- 25 National Banana Split Day
- 26 National Cherry Popsicle Day
- 27 National Pots de Creme Day
- 28 National Cherry Turnovers Day
- 29 National Chop Suey Day
- 30 National Toasted Marshmallow Day
- 31 National Trail Mix Day

Compiled by Lynn Woike, LIFE Staff
Primary source: National Day Calendar



Summer *Living*

Suitcase smarts

Tips from travelers
on how to pack

by **Alicia B. Smith**
Associate Editor

Summer is the season to pack on up and hit the road for sunny destinations, mountainous destination or theme park destinations. It sounds simple enough — pack some sunscreen, an extra pair of comfortable shoes and go.

The reality is travel can be a nightmare, packing can be worse and just getting to the destination can be exhausting. We talked to some travelers who are on the go regularly and asked them for some tips on how to make things easier.

Keith Griffin
*Researcher/Writer U.S. News
& World Report automotive website*
I'm currently not traveling as much,

but here is the one thing that was my travel tip: pack breakfast. I used to travel a lot to the West Coast covering automotive news for places like The Boston Globe and CarGurus.com, among others.

Without fail, I'd be wide-awake by 4 a.m. with scheduled breakfast three or four hours later. So, I always made sure to have instant oatmeal packets or a protein bar (plus a plastic spoon) in my carry-on bag. It made sure my day got off to a healthy start instead of munching on minibar M&Ms. It also allowed me more time to get work done, too, because I didn't need to leave my room in search of breakfast in the early morning.

Melissa Albright
*Vice President
Wethersfield Travel*

Whenever I'm off and have to pack, whether it's just for me or for whole family, I always have a list started days before I even begin packing. I have a basket of travel items in the closet including travel size toiletries, stain sticks, Ziploc bags, et cetera, that I'll go through first and grab what I need. I'm a fan of the Packing Pro app, which allows you to create customized lists based on the type of trip (Disney, beach, weekend, camping). With a list I'm more apt to feel like I didn't forget anything when I get on my way.

I always make sure I have my drawstring laundry bag to put all our

dirty laundry in. It's a good size and can hold about a week's worth of laundry for my whole family. Big or small, having a spot to put your dirty laundry keeps your hotel room somewhat organized. These are some [often forgotten] items I share with families with young kids that are going on a beach vacation: night light, crib sheet, swim diapers, container to fill up milk at buffet restaurant, Thermos to keep milk cold or to keep hot water for formula bottles, Ziploc bags or small containers to stock up at the breakfast buffet for easy accessible snacks during the day, painter's tape and binder clips/clothes pins to cover outlets, pin up wires and secure blanket to stroller for sun protection when it's windy. **RHL**

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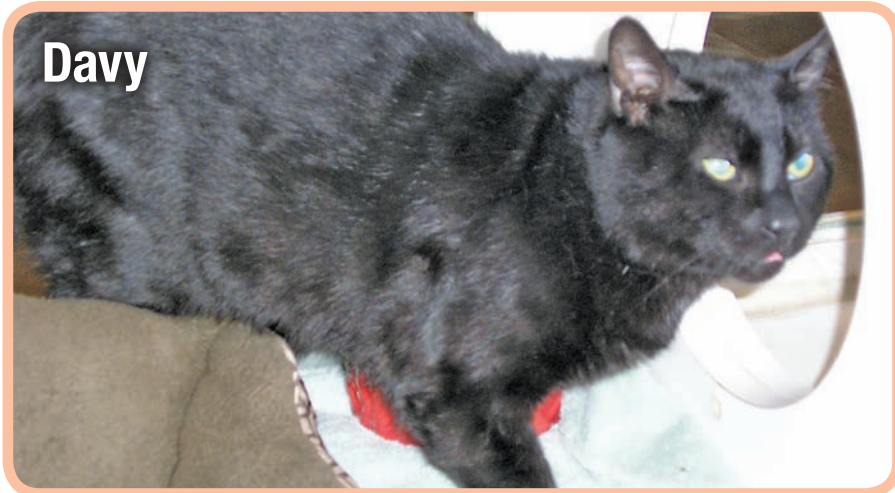
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Davy

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Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.

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The Little Scholars Preschool at the Rocky Hill Congregational Church held an art show for its 3- and 4-year-old students on May 3. Families of the 22 children got to walk through and see their child's art through a variety of projects. Each student had between five and 10 pieces on display.

Showcasing young artists

1. Nora Drapeau, 4, posed next to her fall leaf project. **2.** The teachers at the Little Scholars Preschool program put together a variety of student work assignments, ranging from one on Dr. Seuss to another on firetrucks and another on fall pumpkins. **3.** It was an evening to get dressed up for 4-year-old Tabitha Ceruti, who posed with a painting she created with a fork. **4.** Evan Turner, 4, rocked a bow tie for the art show. **5.** Five-year-old Kaelyn DiMascio showed off her art made with cereal. **6.** Four-year-old Sahaj Patel had many pieces on display but particularly loved his firetruck creation.



75 Years

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Retired, but not finished

Nurses celebrate 75 years of health care and outreach

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

For the past 75 years, an organization in Rocky Hill and Wethersfield has quietly been doing its part to improve the community. The Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Professional Nurses Association, originally known as the Graduate Nurses Association, formed two months prior the start of America's involvement in World War II.

"A group of Wethersfield nurses organized as part of the war effort," Pat Rinaldi said. "At the time, there were similar organizations in the surrounding towns. We are the only one that has still survived, as far as I know."

She is the group's president and a member for 23 years.

What began with 35 nurses signing their own charter quickly expanded to upwards of 80, especially after Rocky Hill was included in the organization a year after its inception. In the years since, membership has fluctuated, but the group now has more than 50 members, many of whom have been part of the association for decades.

All are current or former registered nurses. While it started as a way to help the war effort, the Professional Nurses Association has evolved over the years.

"We've always been community

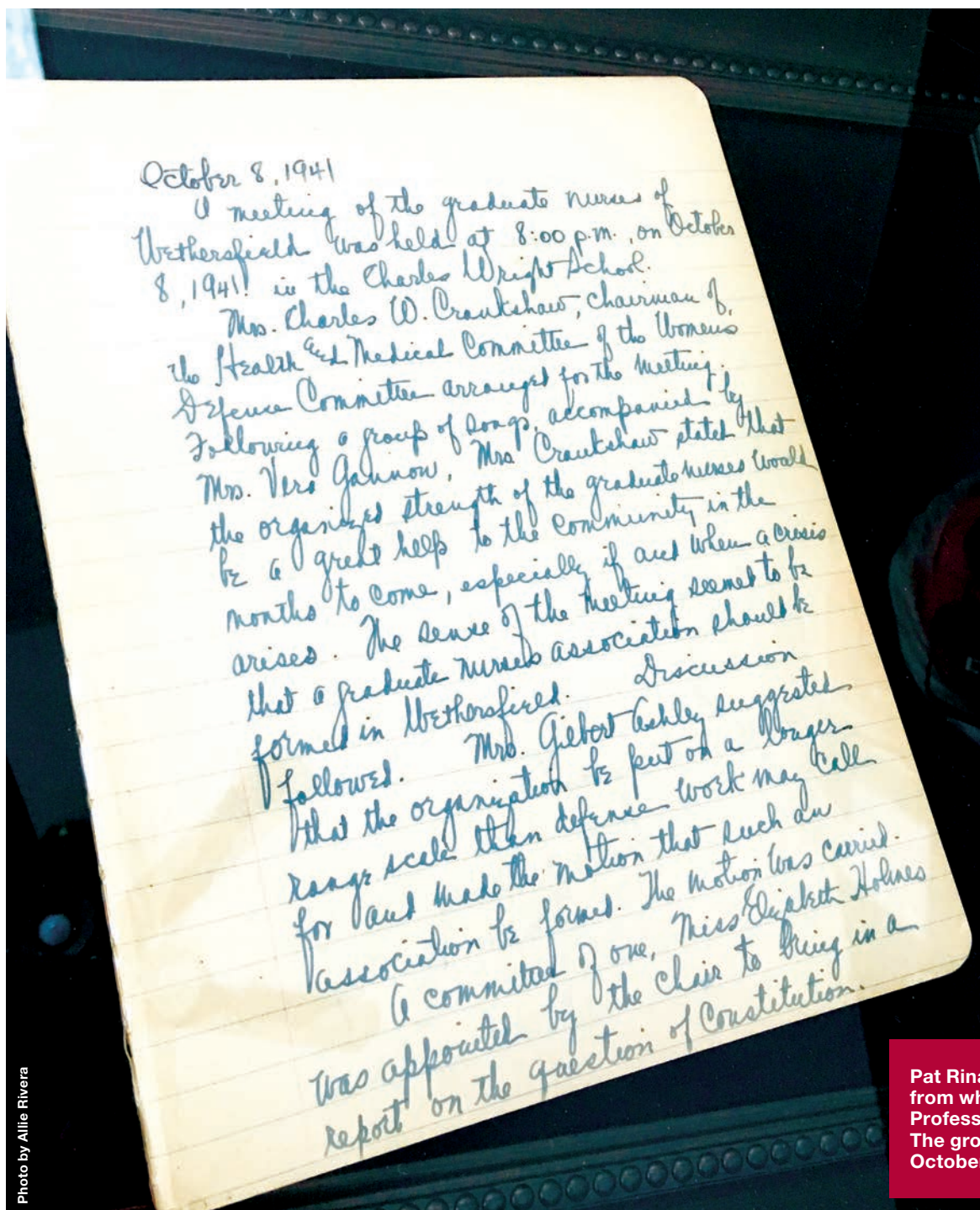


Photo by Allie Rivera

Pat Rinaldi framed the original hand-written minutes from what would become the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Professional Nurses Association, dated Oct. 8, 1941. The group recognized its 75th anniversary this past October and continues its philanthropic work.

“Our basic purpose from day one has been to provide services to the community.”

– Pat Rinaldi

based,” Rinaldi said. “Our basic purpose from day one has been to provide services to the community.”

One of the largest and longest-running ways that the group gives back is by providing flu shots and immunizations, now in partnership with the Central Connecticut Health District. They immunized 8,000 local residents in 1977.

“Now you can get them at any CVS or doctor, but it was only us back then,” 54-year member Jean Jagel said.

The members providing these



services have current licensures and are assisted by doctors. Over the years, the scope of the immunizations has also expanded. In 2009, the group provided more than 7,000 immunizations for the H1N1 flu for residents as young as 6 months.

The organization will also provide homebound vaccinations and in 2015 conducted its first school-based flu clinic at Webb School. Another of its large and longtime endeavors is medical equipment rental.

“We run a free medical equipment loan program through the town of Wethersfield,” Rinaldi said. “It goes all the way back to 1945 when we purchased a wheelchair for the town of Wethersfield.”

In 1969, the group started its equipment fund, growing its rental capabilities from three pieces to hundreds.

“We have quite a relationship with occupational therapists and physical therapists in the area now. They’ll call us directly,” Betty Ann Fusco, a 29-year member, said.

Members said this project would not be possible without the support of the town



of Wethersfield.

“Wethersfield gave us a certain space in the basement of the nature center so we could lend out bigger things,” Jagel said.

The piece that they consider to be the most important part of the organization is its yearly scholarship for students studying nursing, another element that has been part of the association for decades.

“The first scholarship was given in 1949 for \$100,” Rinaldi said.

“That was a lot of money back then,” Fusco added.

Since that first award the association has provided 187 scholarships totaling nearly \$81,000.

The scholarship was initially awarded to a graduating high school senior who planned to study nursing. Now it is granted to college students entering their last year or last semester of a nursing program.

The amount given each year is dependent upon how much money the group raised throughout the

year, but it is supported by the CCHD, as well as member donations.

“What’s wonderful is that it’s all ages of people,” 11-year member Betty Ann Kerrigan said. “It’s really always a delight because they’re so enthusiastic. By that time in their schooling, they know this is a calling and it’s what they really want to do.”

Many of the members who said they attended nursing school a long time ago love getting to see what their scholarship recipients are able to do with their education.

“They have so many opportunities now that we didn’t have when we started,” Rinaldi said. “A lot of times they’ll come back and tell us what they’re doing.”

Along with supporting the education of future nurses, the group is also interested in continuing its own education. They frequently bring in guest lecturers to keep them current on trends in the medical field or provide interesting viewpoints they may not have oth-

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erwise experienced.

"We've had a nurse who served in Vietnam who came and spoke to us. We had someone come and talk to us about what not to do after a knee surgery,"

Kerrigan said.

"Even though I'm not actively practicing in pediatrics, I'm still interested in learning about what's going on, and this gives me the opportunity."

The first hour of each meeting is dedicated to education, and the group typically provides a donation in the guest speaker's honor to the charity of his or her choice.

These nurses are constantly looking for new ways to give back. Past events include donations to the local food bank and making handkerchiefs for cancer patients and they are always looking for new ways to raise funds for their efforts.

In recent years they've held garden events, designed and sold their own cookbook, had movie premieres and sold plants.

"We had a couple of tag sales, which always ended up being on the hottest day of the year," Kerrigan said with a laugh. "We're always looking for new ways to

raise money."

With 75 years behind them, members are proud of all they have been able to accomplish and glad to see that the association is continuing. This past year saw six new members join.

"It's so worthwhile," Rinaldi said.

"I want to do everything I can to keep the organization going because it has such a rich history."

RHL

The Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Professional Nurses Association meets the first Wednesday of every month from October to December and February to May at the Pitkin Community Center, 30 Greenfield St., Wethersfield. For more information contact Pat Rinaldi at 860-563-4150.



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Editorial

MDC consumer advocate is a good idea

State Rep. Gary Byron of Newington recently co-sponsored legislation that would create a new independent consumer advocate, appointed by the state consumer counsel, to represent Metropolitan District Commission customers.

The bill was recently signed into law by Gov. Dannel Malloy.

This is an excellent idea, but it should be only the first step in providing oversight of this unique central Connecticut public utility.

Unlike the electric, cable television, Internet, telephone and natural gas utilities, the MDC is a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered by the General Assembly to provide water and sewer services, primarily to eight member communities including Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield.

It is, in effect, a monopoly.

Customers in those member communities cannot go anywhere else for potable water and sewer services.

The MDC is their only choice.

The district is run by a 29-member board of directors appointed by either the governor, legislature or local town councils. Nearly all of them, if not all, are politically connected.

That raises questions about how responsive they are, or need to be, to the general public. Chances are the political system that appointed them is not going to be too critical of its own crowd.

This past year there was much fuss about a proposal for the MDC to provide a high volume of water to a proposed Niagara Bottling plant in Bloomfield.

District residents worried that it might deplete the water supply to dangerous levels and took issue with their own water rates rising, even slightly, when Niagara would have been offered a much reduced rate.

The most recent controversy has to do with Hartford's fiscal crisis and the possibility that the city may default on its MDC sewer payments.

So, the district decided to put an additional cost burden on the towns – in addition to the ad valorem tax towns already pay that rose again this year – and demand that the member towns each pay a significant numbers of dollars to cover Hartford's share in the event of a default

Those seven towns objected and, in the end, legislation was approved, that protects the MDC and, in turn, its member communities, from financial harm if Hartford cannot pay its share of the cost.

The new legislation dictates that state grant funding be withheld from any defaulting member town and used to pay the MDC bill.

This is an important step, but it's sad that it was required at all as the MDC attempted to pass the buck for one city's crisis – and, in effect, their own as a result of poor planning and management – rather than seeking a more sustainable solution at the outset when Hartford's coming crisis became apparent.

Controversies like these can perhaps be avoided in the future if there is greater consumer oversight of the district's operations. The MDC needs to become more sensitive not just to local governments, but to the needs of the businesses and homeowners who use and pay for its services every day. **RHL**

Letter

Senior center study progresses

To the Editor:

As chairman of the Senior Liaison Committee, a Town Council subcommittee, we are continuing the progress towards reaching a vision for our senior center through a survey that has recently been sent out to residents age 55 and over.

This is a unique opportunity to have a say in how the town approaches the utilization of programs and services to its residents and also the future design of a new senior center.

Even if some residents do not utilize the

senior center, the feedback as to why and if there are programs or services that would bring those residents to the center are certainly encouraged. The more survey responses we receive, the better clarity we can form in the next iteration of our senior center.

Should you have any questions regarding this important survey please contact Rocky Hill Human Services at 860-258-2799.

John Emmanuel
*Chairman
Senior Liaison Committee*

rocky hill LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



Going into the 2017 Hurricane Season...

The Atlantic Hurricane Season of 2016 featured 15 named storms, 7 reached hurricane status and of those 4 became MAJOR hurricanes. Last year was a bit more active than normal, which was accurately forecast. An “average season” includes 12 Tropical Storms (wind 39mph or greater), 6 Hurricanes (wind 74mph

or greater) and 3 Major Hurricanes (111mph or greater).

When it comes to naming, there are 6 lists used in rotation for the Atlantic Basin (including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean)... alternating gender, starting at the top of the alphabet. Two from last year, Matthew and Otto, have been retired by the WMO (World Meteorological Organization, a

group of international scientists) due to their deadly or destructive nature as they both wreaked havoc through the Caribbean. They’ll be replaced with Martin and Owen, when the list is reused in 2022.

The Atlantic season runs from June 1st through November 30th ... although in April, Arlene formed. This is only the 2nd time in the sat-

ellite era for one to do so in that month. Early outlooks are calling for a slightly less active 2017, due to cooler-than-normal Atlantic sea surface temperatures and potential/slow El Nino development.

Regardless of how many storms develop, the bigger issue: if and where they will make landfall – something that is extremely difficult to forecast. **RHL**

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